

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
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INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 2031

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, EC
SUBJECT: SIXTO DURAN-BALLEN NAMES VELASQUISTA RUNNING MATE

REF: QUITO 1644

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: ON MARCH 28 SIXTO DURAN-BALLAN, PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE OF THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTIONALIST FROMT (FNC) ANNOUNCED HIS SELECTION OF VELASQUISTA JOSE ICAZA ROLDOS AS THE FNC'S VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE. IT APPEARS THAT ICAZA'S SELECTION REPRESENTS DURAN-BALLEN'S EFFORT TO CAPITALIZE ON THE REMAINING ELECTORAL STRENGTH OF THE VELASQUISTA MOVEMENT AND THE VELASQUISTS'S DESIRE TO ATTACH THEMSELVES TO A CANDIDATE WITH STRONG ELECTORAL POSSIBILITIES. AN OPEN ALLIANCE WITH THE FNC ON THE PART OF THE VELASQUISTAS RUNS COUNTER TO VELASCO'S OWN INSTRUCTIONS OF MARCH 22 THAT THE PARTY IS NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS. HIS POSITION CREATES A DILEMMA FOR THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION SINCE IT FEELS OBLIGED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CURRENT POLITICAL PROCESS IN ORDER TO SURVIVE. END SUMMARY.
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2. SIXTO DURAN-BALLEN, PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE OF THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTIONALIST FROMG (FNC), ANNOUNCED HIS SELECTION OF VELASQUISTA JOSE ICAZA ROLDOS AS HIS VICE PRESIDENTIAL RUNNING MATE MARCH 28. HIS ANNOUNCEMENT FOLLOWED SEVERAL WEEKS OF SPECULATION ABOUT ICAZA AND INTENSE BACK ROOM POLITICAL

MANEUVERING, GIVING CONCRETE SUPPORT TO RUMORS THAT THE FNC AND VELASQUISTAS HAD REACHED AN UNDERSTANDING.

3. ICAZA, A PROMINENT LAWYER, WAS MINISTER OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND MINISTER OF CB DURING TWO SEPARATE VELASCO ADMINISTRATIONS. HE IS A DIRECTOR OF THE BANK OF GUAYAQUIL (SEE REFTTEL).

4. IN AN EFFORT TO SECURE THE SUPPORT OF THE STILL SIGNIFICANT REMNANTS OF THE VELASQUISTA POLITICAL MOVEMENT, AND TO AVOID AN INDEPENDENT CANDIDACY THAT MIGHT DIMINISH DURAN-BALLEN'S ELECTORAL SUPPORT, ICAZA'S NAME EMERGED FOLLOWING LENGTHY NEGOTIATIONS THREE WEEKS AGO. HAVING REACHED A CONDITIONAL AGREEMENT WITH THE FNC, VELASQUISTA DIRECTORS JUAN CARLOS FAIDUTTI AND CARLOS CORNEJO TRAVELLED TO BUENOS AIRES ON MARCH 15 TO SEEK EX-PRESIDENT JOSE MARIA VELASCO'S CONCURRENCE. AS AN ALTERNATIVE, THEY ALSO OFFERED TO BACK THE CANDIDACY OF GUAYAQUIL PLUTOCRAT LEON FEBRES-CORDERO. THEY WERE DISAPPOINTED. VELASCO, STANDING ON HIGH POLITICAL PRINCIPLE, ANNOUNCED MARCH 22 THAT HE WOULD NOT AUTHORIZE THE VELASQUISTA PARTY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL OR CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS. VELASCO ARGUED THAT THE PARTY SHOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTIONS SINCE THEY WERE PART OF A POLITICAL PROCESS
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IMPOSED BY THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP.

5. WITH THAT BUCKET OF COLD WATER THROWN ON THEIR PLANS AND THE SUCCESS OF THE GOE RETORNO PLAN QUITE LIKELY, THE VELASQUISTAS FACED A CRUCIAL DILEMMA. IT WAS EASY FOR VELASCO AT 85, BANNED FROM REELECTION BY THE ELECTIONS LAW AND CONSTITUTION, TO STAND ON HIGH POLITICAL PRINCIPLE. HIS POLITICAL DISCIPLES, HOWEVER, HAD TO FIND A WAY TO POLITICALLY ARTICULATE THEIR REMAINING POWER OR FACE EXTINCTION. AND, ASIDE FROM THIS PROBLEM, THE PARTY FACED SERIOUS INTERNAL DIVISION. SEVERAL OF THE "CACIQUES" (POLITICAL CHIEFTAINS) HAD DEPARTED IN RECENT YEARS TO FORM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND FORMER PARTY DIRECTOR ALFONSO ARROYO RECENTLY DEFECTED TO BEGIN HIS OWN POLITICAL ORGANIZATION (ADEPO) WITH WHATEVER VELASQUISTAS WHO WILL FOLLOW HIM. FINALLY, THE "JUNTA CIVICA" ALLIANCE WITH OTHER PARTIES WHICH ADVOCATED NULL VOTES IN THE REFERENDUM THAT HAS SURVIVED SINCE THE 1976 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE GOE'S RETORNO PLAN, WAS SHOWING SIGNS OF DIVISIONISM.

6. THE VALUE OF THE VELASQUISTA MOVEMENT TO THE

PRESIDENTIAL CONTENDERS IS ALMOST ENTIRELY BASED UPON ITS LINKAGE WITH THREE OF FOUR STILL INFLUENTIAL CACIQUES IN THE COASTAL PROVINCES (ESPECIALLY MANABI, EL ORO, AND LOS RIOS) WHO ARE KNOWN VOTE DELIVERERS. WHILE THE LOCAL CHIEFTAINS WOULD HAVE BEEN FREE TO MAKE THEIR OWN DEALS REGARDLESS OF THE DECISION OF THE FAIDUTTI LEADERSHIP, THE LAST CHANCE FOR THE SURVIVAL OF THE VELASQUISTAS AS A DISCRETELY IDENTIFIABLE POLITICAL FORCE AND THE MAXIMIZATION OF THEIR INFLUENCE IN THE NEXT GOVERNMENT DEPENDED ON THEIR FINDING A LOOPHOLE IN VELASCO'S DICTUM AND ENDORSING A STRONG CANDIDATE.

7. WHILE FAIDUTTI IS DELAYING MAKING A FORMAL STATEMENT FOR A FEW DAYS IT APPEARS, IN VIEW OF THE NAMING OF ICAZA, THAT WHAT CONFIDENTIAL

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REMAINS OF THE VELASQUISTA POLITICAL MOVEMENT IS GOING TO RISK VELASCO'S WRATH AND POSSIBLE DISAVOWAL IN ORDER TO FIND A WAY OF PARTICIPATING IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS, APPARENTLY THROUGH SUPPORT OF DURAN-BALLEN. ONE POSSIBLE WAY WOULD BE TO ADOPT THE POSITION THAT VELASQUISMO IS NOT FORMALLY PARTICIPATING, BUT THAT THE ORGANIZATION SHOULD HELP OUT THE TICKET OF THEIR OLD COMRADE ICAZA. WHATEVER THE PRETEXT OR FINAL POSITION, IT SEEMS CERTAIN THAT THE POWERFUL MEN OF THE MOVEMENT WILL NOT SEE THEMSELVES SACRIFICED TO VELASCO'S STUBBORN INSISTENCE ON PRINCIPLE. HOWEVER, GIVEN ALL ITS PROBLEMS AND DIVISIONS, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT VELASQUISMO WILL FADE AWAY AS A POLITICAL ORGANIZATION AND ITS POWER BROKERS WILL ATTACH THEMSELVES TO MORE PROMISING COATTAILS.

8. THE SELECTION OF ICAZA PROVIDES THE FNC TICKET WITH THE NEEDED REGIONAL BALANCE AND, BY INCREASING DURAN-BALLEN'S STRENGTH ON THE COAST, APPEARS TO INCREASE HIS ELECTORAL POSSIBILITIES.

CORR

NOTE BY OC/T: MESSAGE DELAYED IN TRANSMISSION.

NOTE: MESSAGE AS RECEIVED.

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